

Pick Your Own

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Pick Your Own

by [TigerPrawn](#)

Summary

A chance meeting gives Will a lead on a potential story.

From Prompt: Small town writer/journalist (Will) meets local celeb (celebrity chef Hannibal?) at the Pick Yo Fruit Farm while Hannibal is hiding from something (secret identity)



Will wasn't a fan of these types of events and especially not of covering them for the local rag that tried to pass as a newspaper.

He was not someone with the patience to write human interest stories and yet here he was, in the middle of the busiest week on record for the local Pick Your Own Fruit Farm.

Despite cringing inwardly with every passing moment, Will had to remind himself there was a reason he hadn't gone into investigative journalism, despite knowing it would have been a good fit after years on the force.

It was after the second time he'd been shot on duty, and had three stabbings before that, that Will had decided he needed to step back from his career as a police detective and go for a change in direction.

He had wanted a change of pace and, more importantly, to remove temptation. He needed to step away from that growing desire to take the law into his own hands and start meting out his own form of justice.

He had joined the force in the first place to try and channel that desire he felt, but it hadn't been enough. He was better off removing himself from the whole situation entirely. Take himself out of the equation before he was too tempted to give into the ball of darkness he could feel swirling inside him.

So now he lived in buttfuck nowhere, working as a writer on the one local paper. Competition for the job hadn't exactly been stiff.

Will sighed as he wandered from the farm house, where he had just interviewed the owner of the popular venue, out to the fields full of people picking their own produce. Ideally he wanted two or three quotes, but he knew full well that meant speaking to at least ten people in order to really make sure he had something usable and nothing repetitive. Which was going to be hard anyway, how much could be said about picking your own fruit and veg?

As Will interviewed the first, tedious, couple that he came to he couldn't help but wonder what it would be like not to write a story on the bumper crop, but instead some exposé on using steroids to increase the yield. Or whatever you could do with fruit and veg? Hormone laced fertiliser? There had to be *something* more interesting than this!

"Is that all?" The woman he had been talking to asked with a bright smile.

"That's great thanks!" Will replied, pressing stop on his dictaphone and giving her a smile despite having no idea what she'd said.

He needed to stop tuning out on these things and asking more questions otherwise he'd have nothing to put in the piece.

A family and an elderly man later, Will wandered in amongst the tomatoes. They were pretty impressive as far as tomatoes went. There weren't as many people in this part for now and Will considered moving along to the next patch or over to the orchard, but a man caught his eye.

Unlike everyone else at the farm, the man was not wearing rough clothes and a sun hat. Instead he was wearing a perfectly tailored, if somewhat fussy, three piece suit. He carried the jacket over one arm and had his sleeves rolled up to the elbows.

Had this guy got lost on his way to the theatre? Maybe he was someone Will should know? A local eccentric or something because he did look vaguely familiar. The catch in his breath made Will take a quick mental stock to ensure this wasn't someone he'd hooked up with. And, no. Will was sure he'd definitely remember this guy if they'd met at a bar.

As the man stood gazing at the perfectly ripe beef tomato that he gently squeezed in his hand, Will felt the urge to know more. This was too much intrigue to pass up. Even if the guy gave him nothing useful it was still sure to be an entertaining soundbite.

So Will made his way over between the tomato plants and trellises.

“Hi, excuse me. Do you mind if-” Will started but was cut off with curt words.

“No thank you,” came the reply though the man didn’t so much as look up from the vegetables he was handling. Or fruits, Will corrected himself, an idea coming to him.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to intrude on you fondling the vegetables.” Will replied jovially, trying to sound as friendly as possible.

At that the man did look up. And Will knew damn well he didn’t imagine it when the man held his gaze a little longer than was necessary before straightening up. Will was sure there was a mutual attraction there.

“You want me to correct you and tell you that tomatoes are fruits so that you can engage me in conversation.” The man observed coolly.

Will quirked a brow, impressed by the deduction.

“You caught me. You psychic or a detective?” Will jokingly asked, thinking back to his own days on the force.

“Neither,” the man replied looking away. “Though when I was a doctor of psychology I consulted many times with law enforcement.”

“Ah a profiler.” Will couldn’t help that words came out in a flirtation tone. Flirting was not his strong point, nor people in general. But when the time did ever come to turn on the charm, he did so quite naturally.

The man was still looking at the tomatoes and Will realised now he was comparing them and choosing a few that were the closest in size and shape.

“More for presentation than for the pot?” Will asked.

At that the man cocked a brow and gave him a quick glance before returning to the tomatoes.

“Are you a psychic or a detective,” The man asked, a slight note of flirtation, and Will chuckled.

“I *was* a detective. Now I’m a journalist of such note that I am spending this glorious Saturday morning interviewing people about how great this year’s crop at the Pick Your Own has been.”

Will grinned as he spoke, the deprecation aimed at the small town mentality of the newspaper rather than at himself.

He could see the man was smirking too.

Enjoying the banter that felt like it could end up as something a little more fun, Will continued.

“The least you can do is feel sorry enough for me to give me a soundbite.” Will urged, a note of teasing in his tone.

The man’s smile was still there. But then it was suddenly gone and he turned away completely.

“No, I’m sorry. I don’t give interviews to the press under any circumstances.”

Will watched the man’s back as he began to walk away. Will might have called out to try and stop him, but there was just something so odd about his response that Will held back, for now.

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It was an hour later that Will saw the man again, and not by accident, but by design.

Will had decided to wait in the carpark after he’d talked to a few more people, wanting to catch the man on the way out, because now he remembered where he knew this guy from. And he knew that the Bentley he was now waiting next to, leaning against it with his arms folded, *had* to belong to this guy.

“Can I help you?”

Will looked up at the voice and took his dictaphone out of his pocket and set it on the hood of the car. The man frowned, his jacket back on and two bags of produce in his arms.

“Just so you know that I’m not recording any of this.” Will said.

“I should assume you don’t have a second device?”

“You’re welcome to frisk me,” Will grinned, and that earned him a raised brow and then a slow smile, the air between them practically crackled.

“How can I help you?” The man conceded.

“I realised who you are.” Will started, “You’re Hannibal Lecter, the world renowned and famously reclusive chef. I’ve seen a segment or two on TV. All pre-filmed, no interviews, no responses to the press. You’re such a mystery that you might make a journalist wonder why you’re so secretive.”

“*If* I am indeed who you believe I am.” He deflected.

Will chuckled, “So who are you then? Rannibal Mector? Cannibal Hector?”

That earned him another cocked brow that might as well have been an eyeroll, but there was something in it that felt like a connection.

“For the sake of argument, I will admit that I am Hannibal Lecter, but even with that information I’m unsure what you will achieve. Perhaps an expose on how the dinner party I am throwing tonight will benefit from some high quality fresh produce picked by my own

hands? If it is of interest to you I also pick my own meat, via an ethical butchered of course. Is this the sort of exciting detail you're hoping for?"

Lecter opened the back seat of his car and carefully put down the bags on the backseat.

"Maybe," Will admitted. "People will read any old trash. Maybe you could give me an exclusive?"

Lecter huffed a chuckle and shook his head.

"And why would I do that?" Lecter asked as he moved around to the driver's side of the car, clearly preparing to leave.

"Because I think you enjoy talking with me." Will smirked.

"You mean flirting with you, let's be clear." Lecter replied, with a slight note of flirtation in his tone.

Will chuckled and nodded, "Sure. But I'm a great judge of character, used to be a detective, remember? And there's something about you that makes me think there is more to your reclusivity than a disdain for public life. You're clearly no wallflower. So there must be some reason why you are so secretive and I'm intrigued."

As Will spoke he stepped closer until Lecter was backed up to his car with nowhere to go, a smile playing over his lips.

"Perhaps I'm simply a private person."

"Who dresses like that and hosts dinner parties?"

"Are you angling for an invite?"

"I'm not good with large groups."

"Something private then, another time. Sunday evening?"

"Are you agreeing to a press interview, Doctor Lecter?"

Lecter's mouth curved into a predatory smile. "I prefer to be off the record. Especially if you're hoping I will be sharing some secrets."

"I have some of my own if you're looking for an exchange. Quid pro quo."

Lecter quirked his brow again at that and then reached inside his chest pocket and drew out a business card.

"If you call me later I will give you my address and we can arrange a time."

"For an interview or a date," Will pushed his luck.

“An exclusive either way.” Lecter answered as Will took the card and felt the stroke of the man’s fingers in the handover.

For a moment they gazed at each other in the charged silence and when Lecter moved forward to open the car door, Will had half expected to be drawn into a kiss. There was definitely something about this man, something Will was connecting to on a level he’d never known before, something kindred, and that was something he wanted to explore further.

“I’ll bring my dictaphone,” Will drawled, trying not to emphasise the *dic*.

“Be sure you do,”

With that Lecter slid into the driver's seat and closed the door soundly. He pulled away leaving Will standing there thinking about Sunday, and how unlikely it was that he would really get to publish an interview of any sort with the man.

Not that he minded. At this point, an interview was one of the last things Will wanted to do with Hannibal Lecter.

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